BOOKS and AUTHORS ❀ REVIEWS and COMMENT

LITERARY CRITICISM AND BOOK NEWS

Mr. Roosevelt's African Book for Sportsmen and Naturalists — Safeguarding Life at Sea—A Masterly Study of Holbein.

AFRICAN GAME.

LIFE HISTORIES OF AFRICAN GAME ANIMALS. By Theodore Roosevelt and Edmund Heller. With illustrations from photographs, and from drawings by Philip R. Goodwin, and with forty faunal maps. 8vo, two volumes, pp. xxix, 430; x, 378. Charles Scribner's Sons.

History, geography, geology, meteorology, botany and all departments of zoology pay tribute to the work of Messrs. Roosevelt and Heller. It is indeed fitting that they should, for all are more or less concerned in the subject. Since the days of Harris, and even before, Africa has been the happy hunting ground of those who seek big game, surpassing even India and the Rockies, for it has a variety and a magnitude of game immeasurably surpassing these, and fitted to fascinate alike the daring slayer, the trophy seeker and the student of natural history; all of which in one, as well as author to boot, is Colonel Roosevelt.

There is no more striking feature of African fauna than its coloration, running the whole chromatic gamut from white to black, and exhausting design in stripes and spots and rings and mottling and blending. There were those who decried the plates of Harris as fanciful in their high coloring; but those who have seen African game in its habitat realize that his palette erred if at all in being too neutral and reserved. Colonel Roosevelt and Mr. Heller devote a long and most interesting chapter to this important theme, showing the apparent purposes and service of some color schemes and the inexplicable character of others. Some are for concealment and some for display; some are protective and some are intended to strike terror to the heart of the enemy. Some, of course, are intended for psychological effect, so far as psychology can be said to exist among animals. But the theories which some Darwinians more Darwinian than Darwin have evolved seem simply fantastic, and well merit the rebuke which is given in the suggestion that even scientists ought to use common sense.

This commendable quality is conspicuous in Colonel Roosevelt's description and discussion of big game. Which is the most dangerous of all creatures to the hunter? "It is unsafe," he judiciously observes, "to try to lay down invariable rules." In some circumstances one animal is the most dangerous; in others, another. But taking the average of individuals and the average of circumstances, our author considers the lion more dangerous to the hunter than any other game. The leopard is more agile, more reckless and more difficult to hit, but it is so much smaller and less powerful than the lion that it is far less likely to kill. The bull buffalo is more formidable than the lion when he charges, but he is less likely to charge, and is generally more easily evaded. The elephant is more likely to charge than the buffalo, but he is not so dangerous. As for the ponderous and always truculent rhinoceros, he is far less dangerous: "In fact," says our author naïvely, "only about as dangerous as the grizzly bear." Is the lion the king of beasts? Well, he does not disdain to gorge himself on actual carrion.

There are particularly interesting chapters on the buffalo, the elephant, the giraffe and the rhinoceros, and others on the many varieties of antelopes, large and small, and the zebras and quaggas. Indeed, all important game animals receive attention, from the two points of view of the adventurous sportsman and the studious scientist. There are sufficient narratives of hunting and killing and dramatic incidents of the chase to gratify the reader who seeks for thrills, and there is also a wealth of scientific description which makes the volumes a real handbook of major African zoology. It should be gratefully added that the personal note is always modestly subdued. Some personal adventures are, of course, given; so good that we might wish there were more of them. There are also personal opinions, but these are always expressed with deference to the opinions of others.

The volumes are plentifully illustrated with photographs and drawings, but all in black and white. It seems a pity that some of them at least were not colored according to nature. There are not a few cases in which a single colored plate would be more instructive than a dozen in black and white with a dozen pages of descriptive text. There is an informing and helpful final chapter on equipment, arms and specimens for those who may wish to follow in Colonel Roosevelt's trail, and there is a sufficiently comprehensive bibliography of East Equatorial Africa. The volumes will hold an important and permanent place in the literature of African sport and in that of natural history.

SAFETY AT SEA

A Practical Manual for Navigators.

A MANUAL OF THE RULE OF THE ROAD AT SEA AND PRECAUTIONARY AIDS TO MARINERS. By Daniel H. Hayne. Second edition. 8vo, pp. xviii, 165. Baltimore: The Co-operative Publishing Company.

In these days of commercial activity, when the importance of safety at sea has, through recent accidents, been indelibly impressed upon the public, and when the fleet of high-speed steam and power driven vessels is multiplying at an amazing rate, increasing in like proportion the responsibility of the masters, pilots, navigating and other officers, it seems right that every material aid tending to lighten the burden of these men should be placed at their disposal. Such an aid is this manual on "The Rule of the Road at Sea" by Mr. Hayne, of the Baltimore Bar.

The volume covers, in its 165 pages, almost every conceivable situation where the quick and accurate application of certain well-defined rules, thoroughly memorized, is sure to help the man in command of a vessel, not only in an emergency, but also at times when the right kind of caution properly exercised will increase the factor of safety to his ship. Part I refers briefly to precautions relating to the rules of the road, to the navigator's willingness to comply with them, and to his prompt and uniform application of them. In Part II are presented some of the more practical elements in ship conduct and discipline and in foresight in handling the vessel and its equipment to which prudent navigators have attached much importance, and to which they owe their immunity from accident.

HANS HOLBEIN.

The Life and Works of a Consummate Craftsman.

HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER. By Arthur B. Chamberlain, Assistant Keeper of the Corporation Art Gallery, Birmingham. With 252 illustrations, including twenty-four in color. In two volumes. Imperial 8vo, pp. xxi, 358; xi, 436. Dodd, Mead & Co.

There are some masters whose biographies compel in the reader a certain play of the imagination, even amid the thickest press of prosaic facts. The biography of Michael Angelo, for example, may be never so fully documented, and yet one must do the best one can to follow him through a shadowy, mysterious world. It is in that kind of a world that all the essential proceedings of the man's soul incessantly go forward. With that kind of a world the greatest art seems always to be more or less allied. But now and then we meet with a type indubitably great yet free from the faintest trace of mystery, a type significant of nothing save the interest that lies in merely ponderable things. Such a type is the artist portrayed by Mr. Chamberlain, whose lavishly illustrated work gives us the most exhaustive survey of the subject thus far published in English. The master of Basle moved about the world adventurously enough, came into contact with divers great personages and put decidedly varied achievements to his credit. Nevertheless, his splendid renown is that of just a consummate craftsman.

It is to Horace Walpole, of all people in the world, that we owe the happiest of the many eulogies pronounced upon this painter's phenomenal mastery of pure technique. Alluding to Holbein's "enamelled bloom," he goes on to remark that he "touched his works till not a touch remained discernible." That is, perhaps, but another way of saying that Holbein was one of those rare men of genius who have quite literally used the instruments of their art only as a means to an end. His technical virtuosity realized itself in such perfection that not the dimmest hint of effort or of self-assertion is left upon the surface of his work. Having a given subject to represent, he represents it as if with no thought of the mechanical difficulties involved. Those he can, as it were, leave to take care of themselves, his hand and his eye are so absolutely unerring. On this hypothesis the reader might possibly urge that we have, then, no real reason for being preoccupied with his technique. The subject, as subject, should arrest us. But here comes in the curious paradox of Holbein's career. Though certain of his subjects have unquestionably a high personal and historical interest, they do not possess, taken in their length and breadth, a fascination at all in proportion to the gifts that Holbein wreaked upon them. It is a point to which Mr. Chamberlain would demur, but the evidence, we fear, is against his view of the matter.

DERICH DE BORN.
(From the portrait by Holbein.)

It is "through the cruel caprice of fate," he argues, that Holbein is known to-day to most people "merely as a great portrait painter, and, in a lesser degree, as a designer of woodcut illustrations of remarkable power and imagination." Wistfully he dwells on the thought of the master's numerous mural decorations, which long ago disappeared; he traverses with all possible appreciation Holbein's minor performances in decorative art, in designs for painted glass, jewelry and so on, and he makes the most, of course, of the few religious compositions. The opinions of so good a critic cannot but carry weight, yet in the long run they leave us unconvinced as to the effect upon Holbein's fame of any "cruel caprice of fate." The truth is that without the portraits his imaginative work would never have placed him where he now stands in the hierarchy of the masters. The imagination shown in the woodcuts may have in it some power, but it does not drive at beauty. The famous Darmstadt picture, the "Meyer Madonna," noble as it is, touching as it is, is still hardly to be regarded as one of the truly sublime affirmations of spiritual emotion in pictorial art. It is, after all, the work of an essentially realistic painter, and when Mr. Chamberlain talks about "the direct and striking veracity of its portraiture and the splendor of its rich, diffused color," he gets nearer to the root of the matter than when he pays tribute to its feeling. In short, when our study takes us outside of the sphere of the portraits we admire Holbein with reservations. It is significant that the most impressive painting by him bearing a religious title, "The Dead Christ in the Tomb," is not, strictly speaking, a religious painting at all; it is only a magnificent study of a dead body. Truth, in other words, is Holbein's supreme virtue, apart from his technique, considered as such, and it is the physical truth, the truth that can be touched and weighed. There, as it happens, the portraits leave us with no need to temper enjoyment with vain regrets.

There are, to be sure, deductions to be made from the value of the portraits—if one chooses to make them. Mr. Chamberlain quotes—to disagree with it—the observation of M. de Wyzewa that Holbein as a portrait painter deals in "half-confidences," not revealing to us, even though he sees them himself, the inmost depths of the characters of his sitters. For our own part we find the French critic admirably suggestive in this matter. Looking up and down the long array of Holbein's portraits we feel very strongly the reserve in them, the difference between their almost colorless serenity and the intense dramatic quality of a portrait, say, by Rembrandt. On the other hand, the distinction, though not to be ignored, is easily subordinated to what one apprehends as the great outstanding merit of the painter, his grasp of the phenomena of the visible world and his power of denoting them through the medium of sheer painted surface. There is nothing esoteric about this art of his. It is, simply, the art of the impeccable draughtsman and colorist. Early in his career he went for a time to Italy and yielded to the influence of the Milanese school. He did not quite recapture the exquisite suavity and tenderness of Leonardo and his group, but there can be no doubt that the experience steadied and refined his taste. For a master of his linear force and purity Holbein is amazingly urbane. His draughtsmanship is firm, but never hard or cold. Beside the austerity of Dürer he seems, sometimes, almost Southern in his charm. It is doubtless to the element of elasticity in his art, to the subtle delicacy of which he was capable, that we are to ascribe the mere beauty of his portraits, and it is, of course, this beauty that makes Holbein immortal; the flowering of all those mighty technical resources of his in portraits that, whether we look to the form in them, to the composition, to the color, or to the draughtsmanship, somehow disclose the note of style, the fineness, the greatness, of a man truly inspired. To live with a Holbein portrait, nay, with even a photograph of one of the paintings or drawings, is like living with a Greek statue, the thing is so masterly, so gloriously "right."

We have indicated one or two points on which we are disinclined to accept Mr. Chamberlain's interpretation of the master, and on the practical side of his work there is another detail inviting adverse comment. Since his book is so richly illustrated—his plates including, by the way, many reproductions in color—it was surely unnecessary for him to burden his text with minute descriptions of practically all the pictures. Some thousands of words might have been omitted without any loss and, in fact, with a substantial gain. But in all other respects he has produced an ideal study. If Holbein's personality does not emerge from it quite at full length that is not his fault. The facts were not available. In everything that could be set forth in exposition of the unfolding of the painter's career, in the dating of his pictures, and in the clarification of his artistic environment, Mr. Chamberlain uses the thoroughness of a scholar and the skill of a practised writer. There are other good books about Holbein. The handsomely illustrated folio by Mr. Davies, for example, will still be sought out by those readers who prefer a thoroughly æsthetic analysis of the subject. But for the history of that subject, for purposes of reference, it will long be necessary to go to Mr. Chamberlain.

DEAFNESS

A Socio-Economic Study of the Infirmity.

THE DEAF. Their Position in Society and the Provision for Their Education in the United States. By Harry Best. 12mo, pp. xviii, 340. The Thomas Y. Crowell Company.

The deaf have, as a class, been regarded with less compassion and solicitude than sufferers from some other infirmities, such as blindness or loss of limbs. For this there is obvious and satisfactory reason. Deafness deprives its victims of the pleasures of music and oratory; it seriously interferes with conversation and the receipt of information, and it subjects its victims to dangers of which hearing would give them warning. But it does not incapacitate them for study and work, nor make them dependent upon others to anything like such an extent as does blindness. There are even those who hold that it has, in this City of Dreadful Noise, great compensations, going far toward reconciling its victims to their lot; or perhaps toward making them objects of envy!

The existence of nearly five hundred deaf persons in every million of population is, however, a social and economic fact of which account is to be taken, and it indicates a condition which should be abated so far as may be possible. Toward such abatement the copious and arranged information provided in Mr. Best's volume should materially contribute. The causes of deafness and its hereditary transmission demand investigation, with a strong probability that in the information thus acquired there will be found ways and means of avoiding the infirmity. The methods of instruction of the deaf are also worthy of consideration, for the increase of their practical efficiency and therefore of their economic value as members of the state. Mr. Best has written as a scientific investigator, with accuracy and orderliness, but not with any dry technicality which would repel or make the book unintelligible to the general lay reader.

MR. HOWELLS'S FANCY AND SCHOLARSHIP

A Fantasy of Past and Present, Rich in Humor and Elizabethan Lore—What We Know of Shakespeare's Personality—More Than of Chaucer's.

GLIMPSES OF THE MOON.

THE SEEN AND UNSEEN AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON. A Fantasy. By William Dean Howells. Crown 8vo, pp. 112. Harper & Bros.

A thin volume, this, but it contains more of real value than many another of thrice its bulk, for it is in just this sort of excellent fooling that Mr. Howells often reaches his best. Here is the whimsical humor that made his farces such, things of pure delight; with, of course, some of that keen philosophy which is not dulled but rather sharpened by a smile, and which often makes us wonder whether he is a philosopher in spite of himself or—the reverse. Once or twice, indeed, he becomes almost mordant, as when he is telling of American tourists at his hotel at Stratford, "where they abounded, mostly in motors with the dust of hurried travel upon them."

It is not for this, however, that the book was most written or will most be prized, but for the conversations of the author with the shades of Shakespeare and Bacon, who revisit the glimpses of the moon and are among the spectators, not the least interested, of the festival performances of some of the poet's works. Upon these—the works themselves rather than the performances of them—they comment most deliciously, with now and then a sly hit at the Delia Bacon-Ignatius Donnelly absurdities. Bacon had one day been speaking of some of the more than tragic passages in his own career, when—

> Shakespeare looked at him with a curious kind of pity. "What a tragedy you could have written! How you could have out-Hamleted and out-Macbethed me!"
>
> "Why not do it yet?" I appealed to them both.
>
> The abject spirit's mood changed and he demanded, scornfully: "And prove that I wrote 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth,' too? No, thanks. I couldn't do anything to reopen that chapter. And if I must say it, I don't envy the author of these plays the gross and palpable renown which he enjoys from them. I can bear what I must bear, till, somehow, I am released from my burden; people don't know how bad I am; many never heard of me as a recreant friend or a corrupt magistrate; they only know me as the author of the inductive method, which they don't understand, or as the putative author of Shakespeare's plays, which they haven't read, not even the fatuous 13,000 Americans who annually visit his birthplace.

When spirits revisit the earth, it appears, they must find resting places at night, just like mortals. It therefore happens that a worthy householder in crowded Stratford refuses to receive Bacon, the thief of Shakespeare's fame; but when they ask shelter at the Harvard House the tables are turned, for the ghost of John Harvard, while frigidly hospitable to the great Lord Verulam, explains that his mother always strongly disapproved of playactors.

Delightful, too, are the comments of these two mighty shades upon each other, and Bacon's shrewd comparison of the world's knowledge of Shakespeare's personality with that of Virgil's, or Chaucer's. As for the authorship of the plays, Shakespeare knows that Bacon would much rather have invented the flying machine. And when the Bard's back is turned the philosopher confides to Mr. Howells: "I shouldn't mind having written the sonnets; but the 'Venus and Adonis,' the 'Lucrece' and some of the plays—excuse me! Honestly, would you like to have written 'Pericles, Prince of Tyre,' or 'A Comedy of Errors'?" Both philosopher and playwright are greatly interested in the movies. Bacon sees in them great educational possibilities, but as for their dramatic future, "that you must have out with Shakespeare."

So it goes on, in a fit setting of realistic description of Warwickshire scenes and ways; as that of the inn which called itself the Four Alls, and illustrated its name by a signboard bearing the effigy of the king who Rules All, of a clergyman who Prays All, of a soldier who Fights All and of an average man who Pays All. "These Four Alls appear to prevail in every civilized country, but they might not everywhere be painted in such smiling irony as here."

The beauty of it all is the deftness with which the author does all the speaking himself, yet puts the words upon the lips of his illustrious interlocutors. It would have been so easy for a less accomplished artist in words to attempt the phraseology of the Elizabethan age for Shakespeare and Bacon, and thus probably to spoil the whole thing. Mr. Howells was wiser. He puts upon early seventeenth-century lips the speech of the early twentieth, with an effect which is not incongruous, but is irresistibly amusing, and more than amusing. It is, in his own words, a fantasy of the seen and the unseen. But it is the unseen that is the more real and convincing. It is a charming paradox that so indomitable a champion of the realistic in literature should give us so fine a *tour de force* of pure imagination; or, shall we say? that so pure a bit of imaginative invention should be so instinct with vital reality.

OUR MODERN POETS AND THEIR MESSAGE

Form and Substance—Alfred Noyes's Song Against War—Stephen Phillips Then and Now—Louis Untermeyer's Spirit and Art.

RECENT VERSE.

THE WINE PRESS: A TALE OF WAR. By Alfred Noyes. 12mo, pp. 49. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

LYRICS AND DRAMAS. By Stephen Phillips. 12mo, pp. 179. John Lane Company.

THE FLIGHT, and OTHER POEMS. By George Edward Woodberry. 12mo, pp. 162. The Macmillan Company.

CHALLENGE. By Louis Untermeyer. 12mo, pp. 144. The Century Company.

POEMS. By Walter Conrad Arensburg. 12mo, pp. 121. The Houghton Mifflin Company.

If somehow or other it had happened that all unsuccessful attempts at poetry were stopped at the source—if we had none of us ever read (or written) any poetry that was not poetry—it is very doubtful whether that old and unending controversy as to the relative importance, to a poem, of form and substance would ever have arisen. In pure poetry the identity of form and content is so complete that we are not conscious of the one as distinct from the other. Pure poetry—to take a phrase from Mr. Bradley's admirable exposition (in the first of his Oxford lectures)—"pure poetry is not the decoration of a preconceived and clearly defined matter." It does not consist of meaning plus sound and imagery; its meaning is itself, and nothing else. Only through experience of imperfect poetry is the habit of analysis into content and form developed. Imperfect poetry is generally a succession of compromises—here a sacrifice of sense to form, there a sacrifice of form to sense. The result is that even where the two elements are fused we nevertheless, in our analytical moods, think of them as separable—just as in our analytical moods we think of orange as separable into red and yellow, although, if we had never seen red or yellow, we should not imagine that orange was anything but a unitary color.

So it is that questions such as these are apt to arise whenever we read poetry critically. How far is the effect due to the underlying ideas, how far to the particular rhythm, the particular imagery, and so forth? Could the same thing, or substantially the same thing, be said in prose? Now, in many great poems that part of the thought which could be conveyed in prose is slight and elusive, almost to the vanishing point. So often is this the case that some people tend to measure the greatness of a poem by the smallness of its subject matter. But this is altogether wrong. The prose translation of a great poem will always be an utterly different thing from the poem itself, because its emotional effect will always be utterly different, though it need not be a negligible thing. There are great poems of which a bare prose translation would be a very substantial thing, and a very fine thing—would even be in many respects a close parallel of the original.

This is the case with Mr. Noyes's new poem, "The Wine Press." It is compact with thought as well as with feeling. War is its theme—war as it is lived by the common soldier of to-day, who fights without ever a sight or a sound of an enemy; war that means

> Flesh against things fleshless.
> Never the soul's desire,
> Never the flash of steel on steel,
> But the brain that is mangled under the wheel,
> The nerves that shrivel, the limbs that reel
> Against a sheet of fire.

The story is startling and horrible, but unescapably convincing. And it is not the bare facts of cruelty and bloodshed that give sharpest point to the tragedy; it is the utter lack of purpose, of will, on the part of the soldier—

> When you are lifted up like this
> Between a finger and thumb,
> And dropped you don't know where or why,
> And told to shoot and butcher and die,
> And not to question, not to reply,
> But go like a sheep to the shearers,
> A lamb to the slaughter, dumb.

As a foil to the realities of the thing we have the dreams of the poet soldier, Michael, who looks upon the Balkan States and Greece as the "hosts of Christ," who sings:

> Reverse the Sword! The Crescent is rent asunder!
> Lift up the Hilt! Ride on with a sound of thunder!
> Lift up the Cross! The cannon, the cannon are dumb.
> The last Crusade rides into Byzantium!

and whose rhapsody is cut short by the news that the allies have quarrelled and are going to fight—

> Fight? Fight? For what?—Why, don't you understand
> What war is? For a port to export prunes,
> For Christ, my boy, and for the Fatherland!

And we have, too, as a frame for the picture, the councils of the "men in black tail-coats" who pull the strings—

> And blood, to them, was only a word,
> And the point of a phrase their only sword,
> And the cost of war, they reckoned it
> In little disks of gold.

We hear it said that Mr. Stephen Phillips's poetic power is declining, that he cannot be expected to produce again plays of the quality of "Paolo and Francesca," "Herod" and "Ulysses." We confess that we have not taken sufficient interest in the question to re-read those dramas for purposes of comparison, but we have a suspicion that the change that has taken place is not so much a change in Mr. Phillips as a change in the poetic background against which he stands. When Mr. Phillips began to write he wrote, as it were, alone. To those of us who were then at the lyric age poetry had seemed to be all bound up in the collected works of unimpeachable classics. Kipling, of course, we had, but Kipling was a thing apart; he did not even try to carry on the main line of the poetic tradition. Mr. Stephen Phillips very certainly did try—and it was largely by the mere fact of his trying that his laurels were won. To our mind there is a strong presumption that if the people who are always harking back to the "Paolo and Francesca" period would take down even "Paolo and Francesca" itself and read it they would find it now just what we find these "Lyrics and Dramas"—very respectable craftsmanship, very respectable sentiments and complete lack of inspiration. It is only fair to add that there are three poems in the book—"Disillusioned," "Love's Tranquillity" and "The English Sabbath"—which are so good that, standing alone, they would put our condescension to shame; but most of them seem to rest on the assumption that the ornament of smooth and fairly pleasing verses is sufficient to make the most commonplace thought presentable.

If verse serves some poets as a cloak for commonplace, it serves others as a cloak for obscurity. Professor Woodberry's obscurity, where there is obscurity (for some of his poems are altogether free from it), is an essential defect; one has the feeling, not merely that the poet has not expressed his thought exactly, but that the thought itself was vague—so vague that a man of Professor Woodberry's intellect would not (though, of course, any number of other men would) have risked setting it forth in prose.

Even in the metaphysical poems, however, there is a certain grandeur and considerable beauty. The first stanza of "The Riding" will indicate their quality:

> I said to my young soul riding,
> "Thou shalt not await the hour,
> Though no strength in thy arm be abiding,
> Though thy virtue hath put forth no flower,
> And life be all thy having,
> And only hope thy dower;
> Courage will fly from thy laggard breast
> Till thy sword be out and thy lance in rest,
> And ever the deed that man does best
> Is a deed beyond his power."

But Mr. Woodberry seems to us at his best in certain comparatively simple verses—"The Dirge," the sonnets "Fame" and "Peary's Sledge," "The Reveller," and above all "To an Ionian Boy," a poem from which we should quote were it not so difficult to stop short of quoting the whole.

Like Mr. Noyes in "The Wine Press," Mr. Untermeyer is argumentative, combative, full of ideas, which he is intent upon conveying. He is imbued with the modern spirit of social revolt, but he does not lose his head in it. Every one of his poems in that vein has an underlying structure of vigorous and well-knit thought. And, except for Masefield and Noyes, we know no other poet of late years in whom is so strikingly revealed the magic power of rhythm and rhyme to set thought on fire. Mr. Untermeyer's danger lies in his facility as a craftsman. In some of the love poems (we have in mind particularly some in his earlier book, but we are reminded of them by "Invocation") this facility gets the better of him, and he may fairly be called sentimental. But in general he has restraint and dignity as well as passion. The finest of the poems, we think, are "A Birthday," "The Great Carousal," "The Shell of the Pearl" and this "Prayer":

> God, though this life is but a wraith,
> Although we know not what we use,
> Although we grope with little faith,
> Give me the heart to fight—and lose.
>
> Ever insurgent let me be,
> Make me more daring than devout;
> From sleek contentment keep me free,
> And fill me with a buoyant doubt.
>
> Open my eyes to visions girt
> With beauty, and with wonder lit—
> But let me always see the dirt,
> And all that spawn and die in it.
>
> Open my ears to music; let
> Me thrill with spring's first flutes and drums—
> But never let me dare forget
> The bitter ballads of the slums.
>
> From compromise and things half done
> Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;
> And when, at last, the fight is won,
> God, keep me still unsatisfied.

Mr. Arensburg attains at his best a certain measure of distinction, but much of his work shows the marks of a hard struggle between thought and sense, from which neither comes out unscathed.